



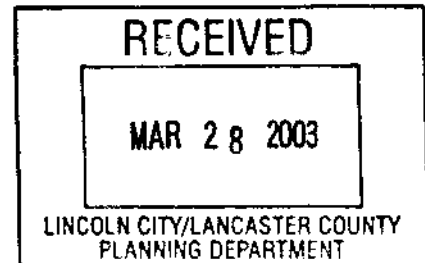
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

2200 N. 33rd St. / P.O. Box 30370 / Lincoln, NE 68503-0370

Phone: 402-471-0641 / Fax: 402-471-5528 / <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/>

27 March 2003

Stephen Henrichson
Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
555 So. 10th St
Lincoln NE 68508



Dear Mr. Henrichson,

Please make reference to your memorandum dated 14 March 2003 requesting comments on 2003 Annual Review of the Comprehensive Plan. As we understand it, two amendments (#10 and #16) have been proposed to the plan by private developers concerning land near saline wetland habitats. We have reviewed the proposals and offer the following comments.

The Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (NGPC) is very concerned that the proposed amendments will have negative impacts on already highly degraded natural saline wetland habitats, which only occur in the Lincoln area in Nebraska. These saline wetlands support two State listed endangered species: the Salt creek Tiger beetle (*Cicindela nevadica lincolniana*) and Saltwort (*Salicornia rubra*). The first amendment proposed is of most concern to NGPC. A change in zoning in the I-80 and North 27th Street area from residential to commercial use invites the destruction of a buffer that currently offers some protection to saline wetland habitat that south of Arbor Road. These buffers, which are that of vegetation and soil, act as filtering systems to the wetlands. Such filtering systems help to prevent road and sediment contaminants from polluting saline wetland habitats. These buffers also capture freshwater runoff, which may otherwise dilute the nearby saline wetland environment. The creation of an "Urban Village" will add more concrete and other impervious surfaces to the area, thus increasing freshwater runoff into the saline wetland area while deleting the filtering system, which currently offer some protection to the saline wetland environment from road contaminants from sediment runoff from existing development in the area. This site also contains saline soils and may have the potential to support saline wetlands in the future. The NGPC strongly urges that no zoning changes be made to this area.

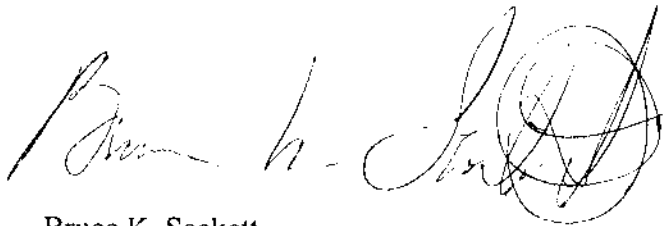
The second amendment involves the change in identification of land on land use map from "Environmental Resources" to "Industrial". The NGPC is concerned that such a change would lead to the destruction of wetland buffers that, once again, offer protection to the wetland environments in the area. Removing the designation from all areas of the parcel other than the "Mitigation" and "Preserved" areas squeezes that natural habitat into a much smaller environment thus reducing the ability for that

ecosystem to survive the pressures of urban growth. It is recommend by the NGPC that this area remain mapped and designated as "Environmental Resources".

Urban sprawl has taken many of our natural habitats in the Lincoln area. NGPC has worked hard, along with the City-County Planning Department, to preserve what little natural habitats we have left in the Lincoln area, the saline wetlands habitats in particular. We were pleased that the comprehensive plan addressed natural resource protections maintained in the plan. It is our hope that the City-County Planning Department considers our concerns involving these two amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and does not make the proposed changes as petitioned. The NGPC looks foreword to assisting City Planners in maintaining these areas as they currently are so future generations can continue to enjoy the natural habitats that once were part of the Lincoln landscape.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact our office at 402-471-5444.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce K. Sackett", with a large, stylized circular flourish at the end.

Bruce K. Sackett
Administrator-Reality/Environmental Service

Cc: Frank Albrecht (NGPC)
Mark Brohman (NGPC)
Ted LaGrange (NGPC)
Mike Fritz (NGPC)
Rick Schneider (NGPC)
Julie Godbersen (NGPC)
Steve Anschutz (USFWS)